REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-8 and 11-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious having regard to U.S. Patent 6,085,238 issued to Yuasa in view of U.S. Patent 5,825,772 issued to Dobbins.

Claim 1 of the present application is directed to a method of forwarding packets in a communication system. The method includes providing multiple forwarding rules, the forwarding rules based on routing topology and policing information relevant to each of multiple distinct and isolated user networks. The Examiner has equated the access policy rule of Dobbins (taught as part of Figure 7 and at column 17 lines 25 to 43) with the multiple forwarding rules of claim 1. However, the access policy rule of Dobbins is not a forwarding rule, nor is it based on routing topology. The access policy rule taught by Dobbins is simply a set of conditions which must be met for a connection to be established. As can be seen from Figure 7b and steps 103-107 of Figure 7a of Dobbins, the purpose of the access policy rule is for the ingress switch to determine whether a connection is to be established or whether the packet is to be dropped. If the destination address and the source address are on the same VLAN or if they both share an "open" policy, and if the destination address and the source address are not on the same port, then a connection is established. Otherwise, the packet is dropped. This is not a forwarding rule as is recited in claim 1 of the present invention, but rather is an access rule. Furthermore, the routing topology of the network is not taken into account when setting the access policy rule (as seen in Figure 7b of Dobbins), in contrast to the forwarding rules of claim 1 of the present invention.

The Examiner has also cited column 13 lines 48-59 of Dobbins as teaching providing multiple forwarding rules. This section of Dobbins appears to teach network topology learning, and does not teach providing the system with multiple forwarding rules based on policing information relevant to each of said distinct and isolated user networks.

Claim 1 also includes selecting an appropriate forwarding rule. As described above, Dobbins does not teach the use of forwarding rules as defined in claim 1 of the present application.

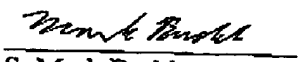
Claim 1 also includes forwarding packets to an output service interface based on a destination address in the packets and on information in the forwarding rules. As explained above, Dobbins does not teach the use of forwarding rules as defined in claim 1 of the present application. While Dobbins appears to teach forwarding of packets, this forwarding of packets is not based on information in forwarding rules. Rather, the access rules of Dobbins are used to either establish a connection or to drop a packet. The access rules of Dobbins are not used to determine to which output service interface to forward packets.

Claim 8 of the present application is directed to a packet forwarding entity. The entity includes multiple route servers for calculating multiple forwarding rules relating to instances of service to which service interfaces belong based on routing, topology, and policing information. As explained above, Dobbins does not teach such forwarded rules. Nor does Dobbins teach the use of such forwarding rules by edge forwarders as a basis for where to direct service interfaces to user networks.

These elements are also not taught by Yuasa. The remaining claims are variously dependent on claims 1 and 8 and include the same limitations discussed above. As neither Yuasa nor Dobbins, separately or in combination, teach every element of the claims of the present application, the Applicant respectfully submits that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established against claims 1 to 8 and 10 to 21 of the present application.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the claims at present on file are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and action to this end is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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